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THE PROFESSIONAL SHARPER.

BY AN OLD HAND.

LIKE many professions, there are in the business of a sharper many different qualities and kinds of men. There are the rough and brutal, who, finding their work unproductive, do not hesitate to resort to more felonious undertakings. There are also those who, through thick and thin, stick steadily to their trade, with a kind of conviction that it is a legitimate calling; and there are others who, more subdued and gentlemanly, go about their work with refinement and ease. The last-described specimen of the craft is the most interesting. His movements never cause alarm; he is never put out of countenance by the accident of ill-luck, and never shows a temper other than even and gentle. What sort of nature underlies his demeanour it is impossible to define; but certainly, although his actions are something cat-like, he is never so indiscreet as to show the tiger. He is a great frequenter of public-houses, and usually visits those places of resort where the respectable artisan class sojourn for an evening's entertainment. If there is a piano in the establishment, he will occasionally be seen engaged in deep and earnest converse with the player. He is known to the barmen, and especially to the ladies, if there be any in the house. He pays them great deference; and generally speaks in a subdued and humble accent that has something shy in it. He is not over-neatly dressed, conveying the impression that the world is used up, and has collided against him in the process. He is clean shaved, somewhat lank, and having a ripple of pleasantness quivering on the clean upper lip. His most captivating characteristic is his blandness; he is bland to a degree—ever gentlemanly and refined in his attitudes and deportment.

As he walks leisurely and unconcernedly into the smoke-room or bar-parlour, he nods familiarly to the assembly, and at once sets the company at its ease. He remarks that 'It's warm; ' or, 'Glorious weather; ' or, 'Dear me, it's very wet,'

or offers an unsolicited opinion concerning the music, if there happens to be any in the room. His opinion, although differing in expression occasionally, is always sympathetic. He is never a critic—always a panegyrist. He has an extensive range of knowledge. Have they ever heard Rubinstein? No! Perhaps they have heard Halle? No! Dear me; that's singular. Still, he does not know. After all, everything's in a name, and he dares to say many an obscure player may be quite equal to any of those who have sounding reputations. It's the way of the world—most peculiar way, certainly. They would say so if they had had his experience; and then, with earnest and concentrated expression, he launches out on a sea of experience; tells harrowing tales, short and pithy, about the continent and the doings there; tells how he has had his ups and downs, and, after exciting the partially excited mind of his auditors, he asks them if they know anything of the gay capitals of the continental countries.

Strange, that anything foreign has such an attraction. He seems to know and duly appreciate the weakness. Conjuring, he tells them with a glance of mystery, is one of the chief delights of the European cities. Paris! Ever been in Paris? No! Three or four significant shakes of the head follow, in order to add the required amount of wonder to the disclosures he might make if he liked. Baden-Baden! Ever there? No! Nor Vienna, nor Monte Carlo, nor Berlin? No! Astonishing, truly. Ah, there's life there, if you like. The people live, actually live, on excitement. Every boy in the street is a wizard, and every girl a clairvoyant. That is where life is enjoyed. A short pause, during which he seems to be visiting mentally the places of his narrative, and occasionally gulping them down into oblivion with each sip of his glass. He gazes from one to the other, and becomes even blander, and encourages their queries by a glance of the utmost interest.

The company expands, and others drop into a seat and throw an inquisitive look on him.

'You do not seem to have made the very best of your travels, then?' ventures one of the party.

'Ah, my friend, if you had travelled as I have done, you would not ask such a question. You would understand how difficult it is for a man of very limited knowledge to cope with men who are versed in almost every pursuit.'

Another pause, in which the past seems to have revived, and another sip.

'They must be extremely forward in the countries you mention.'

'Forward! Bless you, gentlemen, I could show you tricks that you would never dream of being possible, that I have been taught by the children of those places. For example, this penny-piece that I hold in my hand; you see it is there (holding it up); 'and now—presto, it is gone' (disappears accordingly); 'and yet, if I may take the liberty of removing this gentleman's hat' (does so), 'you find the identical penny-piece lying calmly at the bottom, as if it had lain there all its life.'

Glances of wonder, succeeded by a peal of laughter, and a titter at the gentleman with the hat, follow the execution of this feat.

The conjurer sips his glass in an unconcerned fashion, intending to convey the impression that the feat is a mere bagatelle. The curiosity of the company is excited, and will not now be held back; it must be satisfied. The professor eyes the assembly in the blandest and most encouraging manner, yet withal with a veil of mystery overhanging his features, that serves to further excite them. A trio of voices demand another example of his skill, and in almost one breath, issue instructions to the waiter to refill the gentleman's glass. He takes a sip of the newly-brought liquor and coughs slightly.

'Well, gentlemen, you see it is a trifle hard on a person circumstanced like myself. I am not quite so well off as I used to be, and although it is a habit of mine occasionally to oblige a company, I have my objection to doing these little things in public, because I often meet friends who knew me in my palmy days, and it is always an embarrassment to me when I am met by any of my former associates. Nevertheless, if you really desire it, gentlemen, I will not be so ungentlemanly as to stand between you and a little enjoyment, if we can dignify it by that name.'

A unanimous expression of approval follows this deprecatory little speech, and a general demand for another exhibition of his skill is made in a reassuring tone.

The professor, with a tinge of reluctance that seems to intensify the determination of the audience to have the whole programme, spreads his long lank hands, with their knuckles downwards, on the table; and in a careless manner, asks if any gentleman could favour him with a half-sheet of paper. Presently, the required article is handed to our hero, and he dexterously fashions it into a sort of cup with a long point at the base. He then produces from his pockets two peas, which he places underneath this cup, passes his hands over the top, turns them backwards on

the table, and asks one of the company to lift the cup. The cup is lifted, and—the peas are gone! He takes the cup again, places it on the table, and requests one of the audience to raise the cup. This is done, and—a large glass marble is found beneath it! The cup is carefully replaced, again lifted, and behold—a blank!

A feeling of wonder floats over the assembly, and vociferous applause proclaims their delight in the performance.

'That, gentlemen,' the professor explains with an air of indifference, 'is a trick very popular amongst the Arabs, but, like most of their tricks, is very simple. The next one is rather better. Will any gentleman, or number of gentlemen, oblige me with a loan of sixpence in pennies?'

Half-a-dozen hands are down at once into as many pockets, and the requisite amount of copper is immediately laid on the table.

'One, two, three, four, five, six. These, gentlemen, I place in this paper and screw tightly up. The paper I put under this tumbler, as you see. Will any gentleman kindly lend me his hat?—Ah! thank you. The hat I place beneath the table immediately under the glass containing the coppers, and when I say "Presto, hi! begone!" you hear the pieces drop one by one into the hat through the table.'

More amazement is depicted on every face.

'Some gentleman kindly remove the glass and count the coppers, to assure himself and the company they are still there.'

A hand is reached forth and withdraws the paper, only to find it—empty.

'The paper, gentlemen, I again screw tightly up and again place beneath the glass. The pennies I have still in the hat. My business now is to transfer the coins to their original place beneath the tumbler, which I proceed to do. You will perceive now, gentlemen, that the hat is empty; and if you kindly uncover the packet, you will find that they are where they were first placed.'

The packet is again unfolded, and the pennies are found, to the increased astonishment of the company, to be resting where they were originally placed.

Another sip of his glass and a short cough, and the prestidigitator puts forward his hand and incloses the pieces preparatory to transferring them to his waistcoat pocket, a practice which, amid roars of laughter, he declares he learned while sojourning in Malta not more than twelve months ago. This feat, blended with the cheeriest ripple of laughter possible, completely vanquishes the company, one of whom slaps him familiarly on the back, and remarks very emphatically on his cleverness, which he holds to be unsurpassed. Two of the assembly join in the opinion that he is a very demon, following which demonstrative appreciation there is more laughter and more eagerness. Matters wax warmer. The conjurer's practised eye observes it with satisfaction.

'Gentlemen, I have a pack of cards here.' He pauses for a couple of minutes, which time he utilises by spreading the cards in every conceivable shape—runs them up his arm, curves them round the table, and throws them about with wonderful dexterity. 'Any person take a card from the pack and I will tell him what it is.'

One of the company takes a card, looks at it, and replaces it in the pack. The professor then juggles the card upside down, and then, in an earnest voice, asks: 'You are quite sure you remember the card you selected?'

'O yes.'

'Would you be surprised to find that this is it?'—holding up a card.

'Yes, I should be very much surprised.'

'Ah, I thought so. Are you sure you can say the same about this?'—holding up another card.

'Correct, by Jove!' exclaim the company, and there is general laughter, the distinguishing part of it being that the individual who selected the card was laughed at, the joke being that he had been led into a trap.

The professor smiles blandly. 'I have here,' he resumes, after a pause, 'a small wooden case. Any gentleman may inspect it. Pass it round and examine it. Thanks. All satisfied? Thanks.—O yes, it is wood; no deception whatever, I assure you. Simply, "The quickness of the hand deceives the"— You know the phrase. Now, you will see that the case is made exactly like a cigar case, with hinges on the back so as to open and shut. I place the case thus on the table; I take the cards and shuffle, thus; I then request the company to take from the pack, say, half-a-dozen cards.—All done? How many have you? Six? Thanks. Now, have the kindness to replace them in the pack. You all remember your separate cards?—Yes; very well. Now, I take the case, which I open before you thus. You see that it is empty—nothing whatever in it. I then close it. Now then, No. 1. The card you took from the pack is the three of spades. I open the case. Do you recognise it? Thanks.—No. 2. You will see that the case registers the ace of spades. Do you remember the card—the card that you selected? Thank you.—No. 3. The case shows the ace of hearts. That yours? Thanks.—No. 4. I have here the king of hearts. Yours, you say? Much obliged.—No. 5. The card shown in the case is the knave of spades. Do you know it? Thank you.—The last card I have is the ace of diamonds. Does any one know the card?—Yours, sir? Ah, I thought so.—That completes the trick, gentlemen; and he settles himself to another small sip, and to an additional relapse of unconcern.

This manœuvre brings 'the house down,' and there is a clamour for more. Some of the company request that the trick be shown; to which demand the professor puts on a blandly injured air, and asks if it is a fair thing to ask for, after his humble endeavour to entertain them. 'Gentlemen, I did at one time,' he continues in a subdued voice, 'teach that trick for two shillings a head, but I put it to you whether knowledge of that sort should be sold so cheaply?'

For the next half-minute there is a jingle of coins on the table, and about twenty shillings lie before him. What man could withstand the temptation? He at length yields to their cries, and shows the wonderful card-trick, which, as it is unfolded with a due amount of mysterious comment, becomes as transparent as glass, and takes the edge off their astonishment.

There is a lull in the popularity. Does the professor see it? He is now busy with a small ginger-beer bottle, which he rolls over and over. There is a half-crown inside it. All eyes are attracted at once. Several of the company take up the bottle, and put it down with an exclamation of more wonder. He is irrepressible, they think.

'Gentlemen,' he says, 'I will give the contents of that bottle to any person who will get it out without breaking the glass.'

The company clutch it again, and pass it through another examination, and put it down hopelessly with a laugh.

Taking the bottle in his hand, the professor gives it a jerk, and the silver piece drops into his palm. 'If any one doubts my word, or that the coin is in any way manufactured for the purpose, I will do the trick with a penny. Any gentleman in the room oblige me with a penny?—Thank you. I take the coin in my hand, thus; take the neck of the bottle in the other hand, and pass the coin in through the aperture before you can say "Jack Robinson." The penny rattles in the bottle to the amazement of the audience, and they seize the bottle and make frantic and useless efforts to extract the coin.

The professor now leans back and calmly surveys the company, and in the blandest language and with the most earnest and mystic demeanour, says: 'That trick I teach for a shilling, gentlemen; although in eastern climes I had ten times the sum.'

A pause ensues, during which the auditory glance at one another perplexedly. At length a voice cries in a decided tone, 'I'll have a shilling's-worth anyhow;' and its possessor throws the coin down, which is at once followed by a dozen others. Stretching forth his hands, the man of business proceeds to detail the process of the deception, and how the deceit is successfully achieved.

Another lull of popularity. Astonishment has again faded. The company know his secret, and they find it is not a miracle; they are somewhat disappointed; they smoke their pipes in silence.

The professor throws a knife on the table. 'If any gentleman will kindly open that for me,' he says, 'I will pay him a sovereign.'

Some of the auditory grasp the knife and make strenuous endeavours to wrench the blade open. On it goes round the audience. Every man has his turn, but in vain. The task is hopeless. More mystery. The blank faces declare that it is impossible.

The owner says: 'Not at all, gentlemen; perfectly simple, nothing easier. Try it now! (Throws the knife down again, and it is opened quite ordinarily!) 'Gentlemen, the secret is my own. I sell the secret for five shillings, and I throw the knife in. Is there any purchaser? I'm going away to-morrow, and if you really want a curiosity, there's your chance. Five shillings takes it. Any purchaser? None? Then, good-evening, gentlemen. I am heartily pleased to have met you. Good-evening to you all.'

Five minutes later, the man of business is entertaining a company in another 'house,' and

sitting alongside him is one of his previous audience, the foremost spokesman of the evening, to whom he will by-and-by count out half the proceeds of the evening's 'lay.'

A HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE question which disturbed Frances, which nobody knew or cared for, was just as little likely to gain attention next day as it had been on the evening of Mr Winterbourn's death. Lady Markham returned to Nelly before breakfast; she was with her most of the day; and Markham, though he lent an apparent attention to what Frances said to him, was still far too much absorbed in his own subject to be easily moved by hers. 'Gaunt. Oh, he is all right,' he said.

'Will you speak to him, Markham? Will you warn him? Mr Ramsay says he is losing all his money; and I know, O Markham, I know that he has not much to lose.'

'Claude is a little meddler. I assure you, Fan, Gaunt knows his own affairs best.'

'No,' cried Frances: 'when I tell you, Markham, when I tell you! that they are quite poor, really poor—not like you.'

'I have told you, my little dear, that I am the poorest beggar in London.'

'O Markham! and you drive about in hansoms, and smoke cigars all day.'

'Well, my dear, what would you have me do? Keep on trudging through the mud, which would waste all my time; or get on the knife-board of an omnibus? Well, these are the only alternatives. The omnibuses have their recommendation—they are fun; but after a while, society in that development palls upon the intelligent observer. What do you want me to do, Fan? Come, I have a deal on my mind; but to please you, and to make you hold your tongue, if there is anything I can do, I will try.'

'You can do everything, Markham. Warn him that he is wasting his money—that he is spending what belongs to the old people—that he is making himself wretched. Oh, don't laugh, Markham! Oh, if I were in your place! I know what I should do—I would get him to go home, instead of going to—those places.'

'Which places, Fan?'

'Oh,' cried the girl, exasperated to tears, 'how can I tell?—the places you know—the places you have taken him to, Markham—places where, if the poor general knew it, or Mrs Gaunt!—'

'There you are making a mistake, little Fan. The good people would think their son was in very fine company. If he tells them the names of the persons he meets, they will think!—'

'Then you know they will think wrong, Markham!' she cried almost with violence, keeping herself with a most strenuous effort from an outburst of indignant weeping. He did not reply at once; and she thought he was about to consider the question on its merits, and endeavour to find out what he could do. But she was undeceived when he spoke.

'What day did you say, Fan, the funeral was to be?' he asked with the air of a man who has

escaped from an unwelcome intrusion to the real subject of his thoughts.

Sir Thomas found her alone, flushed and miserable, drying her tears with a feverish little angry hand. She was very much alone during these days when Lady Markham was so much with Nelly Winterbourn. Sir Thomas was pleased to find her, having also an object of his own. He soothed her, when he saw that she had been crying. 'Never mind me,' he said; 'but you must not let other people see that you are feeling it so much, for you cannot be supposed to take any particular interest in Winterbourn: and people will immediately suppose that you and your mother are troubled about the changes that must take place in the house.'

'I was not thinking at all of Mrs Winterbourn,' cried Frances with indignation.

'No, my dear; I knew you could not be. Don't let any one but me see you crying. Lady Markham will feel the marriage dreadfully, I know. But now is our time for our grand coup.'

'What grand coup?' the girl said with an astonished look.

'Have you forgotten what I said to you at the Priory? One of the chief objects of my life is to bring Waring back. It is intolerable to think that a man of his abilities should be banished for ever, and lost not only to his country but his kind. Even if he were working for the good of the race out there— But he is doing nothing but antiquities, so far as I can hear, and there are plenty of antiquarians good for nothing else. Frances, we must have him home.'

'Home!' she said. Her heart went back with a bound to the rooms in the Palazzo with all the green *persiani* shut, and everything dark and cool. It was getting warm in London, but there were no such precautions taken; and the loggia at night, with the palm-trees waving majestically their long drooping fans, and the soft sound of the sea coming over the houses of the Marina—ah, and the happy want of thought, the pleasant vacancy, in which nothing ever happened. She drew a long breath. 'I ought not to say so, perhaps; but when you say home!—'

'You think of the place where you were brought up? That is quite natural. But it would not be the same to him. He was not brought up there; he can have nothing to interest him there. Depend upon it, he must very often wish that he could pocket his pride and come back. We must try to get him back, Frances. Don't you think, my dear, that we could manage it, you and I?'

Frances shook her head, and said she did not know. 'But I should be very glad. Oh, very glad: if I am to stay here,' she said.

'Of course you would be glad; and of course you are to stay here. You could not leave your poor mother by herself. And now that Markham—now that probably everything will be changed for Markham— If Markham were out of the way, it would be so much easier; for you know, he always was the stumbling-block. She would not let Waring manage him, and she could not manage him herself.'

Frances was so far instructed in what was

going on around her, that she knew how important in Markham's history the death of Mr Winterbourne had been; but it was not a subject on which she could speak. She said: 'I am very sorry papa did not like Markham. It does not seem possible not to like Markham. But I suppose gentlemen— Oh, Sir Thomas, if he were here, I should ask papa to do something for me; but now I don't know who to ask to help me—if anything can be done.'

'Is it something I can do?'

'I think,' she said, 'any one that was kind could do it; but only not a girl. Girls are good for so little. Do you remember Captain Gaunt, who came to town a few weeks ago? Sir Thomas, I have heard that something has happened to Captain Gaunt. I don't know how to tell you. Perhaps you will think that it is not my business; but don't you think it is your friend's business, when you get into trouble? Don't you think that—that people who know you—who care a little for you—should always be ready to help?'

'That is a hard question to put to me. In the abstract, yes; but in particular cases— Is it Captain Gaunt for whom you care a little?'

Frances hesitated a moment, and then she answered boldly: 'Yes—at least I care for his people a great deal. And he has come home from India, not very strong; and he knew nothing about—about what you call society; no more than I did. And now I hear that he is—I don't know how to tell you, Sir Thomas—losing all his money (and he has not any money) in the places where Markham goes; in the places that Markham took him to.—Oh, wait till I have said everything, Sir Thomas; they are not rich people; not like any of you here. Markham says he is poor.'

'So he is, Frances.'

'Ah,' she cried with hasty contempt, 'but you don't understand. He may not have much money; but they—they live in a little house with two maids and Toni. They have no luxuries or grandeur. When they take a drive in old Luca's carriage, it is something to think about. All that is quite, quite different from you people here. Don't you see, Sir Thomas, don't you see? And Captain Gaunt has been—oh, I don't know how it is—losing his money; and he has not got any—and he is miserable—and I cannot get any one to take an interest, to tell him—to warn him, to get him to give up!—'

'Did he tell you all this himself?' said Sir Thomas gravely.

'O no, not a word. It was Mr Ramsay who told me; and when I begged him to say something, to warn him!—'

'He could not do that. There he was quite right; and you were quite wrong, if you will let me say so. It is too common a case, alas! I don't know what any one could do.'

'Oh, Sir Thomas! if you will think of the old general and his mother, who love him more than all the rest; for he is the youngest. Oh, won't you do something, try something to save him?' Frances clasped her hands, as if in prayer. She raised her eyes to his face with such an eloquence of entreaty that his heart

was touched. Not only was her whole soul in the petition for the sake of him who was in peril, but it was full of boundless confidence and trust in the man to whom she appealed. The other plea might have failed; but this last can scarcely fail to affect the mind of any individual to whom it is addressed.

Sir Thomas put his hand on her shoulder with fatherly tenderness. 'My dear little girl,' he said, 'what do you think I can do? I don't know what I can do. I am afraid I should only make things worse, were I to interfere.'

'No, no. He is not like that. He would know you were a friend. He would be thankful. And oh, how thankful, how thankful I should be!'

'Frances, do you take, then, so great an interest in this young man? Do you want me to look after him for your sake?'

She looked at him hastily with an eager 'Yes'—then paused a little, and looked again with a dawning understanding which brought the colour to her cheek. 'You mean something more than I mean,' she said, a little troubled. 'But yet, if you will be kind to George Gaunt, and try to help him, for my sake. Yes, oh, yes. Why should I refuse? I would not have asked you if I had not thought that perhaps you would do it—for me.'

'I would do a great deal for you; for your mother's daughter, much; and for poor Waring's child; and again, for yourself. But, Frances, a young man who is so weak, who falls into temptation in this way—my dear, you must let me say it—he is not a mate for such as you.'

'For me? O no. No one thought—no one ever thought'— cried Frances hastily. 'Sir Thomas, I hear mamma coming, and I do not want to trouble her, for she has so much to think of. Will you? Oh, promise me. Look for him to-night; oh, look for him to-night!'

'You are so sure that I can be of use?' The trust in her eyes was so genuine, so enthusiastic, that he could not resist that flattery. 'Yes, I will try. I will see what it is possible to do. And you, Frances, remember you are pledged, too; you are to do everything you can for me.'

He was patting her on the shoulder, looking down upon her with very friendly tender eyes, when Lady Markham came in. She was a little startled by the group; but though she was tired and discomposed and out of heart, she was not so preoccupied but what her quick mind caught a new suggestion from it. Sir Thomas was very rich. He had been devoted to herself, in all honour and kindness, for many years. What if Frances—? A whole train of new ideas burst into her thoughts on the moment, although she had thought as she came in, that in the present chaos and hurry of her spirits she had room for nothing more.

'You look,' she said with a smile, 'as if you were settling something. What is it? An alliance, a league?'

'Offensive and defensive,' said Sir Thomas. 'We have given each other mutual commissions, and we are great friends, as you see. But these are our little secrets, which we don't mean to tell. How is Nelly, Lady Markham? And is it all right about the will?'

'The will is the least of my cares. I could not inquire into that, as you may suppose; nor is there any need, so far as I know. Nelly is quite enough to have on one's hands, without thinking of the will. She is very nervous and very headstrong. She would have rushed away out of the house, if I had not used—almost force. She cannot bear to be under the same roof with death.'

'It was the old way. I scarcely wonder, for my part: for it was never pretended, I suppose, that there was any love in the matter.'

'O no' (Lady Markham looked at her own elderly knight and at her young daughter, and said to herself, What if Frances—?); 'there was no love. But she has always been very good, and done her duty by him—that, everybody will say.'

'Poor Nelly. That is quite true. But still I should not like, if I were such a fool as to marry a young wife, to have her do her duty to me in that way.'

'You would be very different,' said Lady Markham with a smile. 'I should not think you a fool at all; and I should think her a lucky woman.' She said this with Nelly Winterbourn's voice still ringing in her ears.

'Happily, I am not going to put it to the trial.—Now, I must go—to look after your affairs, Miss Frances; and remember, that you are pledged to look after mine in return.'

Lady Markham looked after him very curiously as he went away. She thought, as women so often think, that men were very strange, inscrutable—'mostly fools,' at least in one way. To think that perhaps little Frances— It would be a great match, greater than Claude Ramsay—as good in one point of view, and in other respects far better than Nelly St John's great marriage with the rich Mr Winterbourn. 'I am glad you like him so much, Frances,' she said. 'He is not young; but he has every other quality; as good as ever man was, and so considerate and kind. You may take him into your confidence fully.' She waited a moment to see if the child had anything to say; then, too wise to force or precipitate matters, went on: 'Poor Nelly gives me great anxiety, Frances. I wish the funeral were over, and all well. Her nerves are in such an excited state, one can't feel sure what she may do or say. The servants and people happily think it grief; but to see Sarah Winterbourn looking at her fills me with fright, I can't tell why. She doesn't think it is grief. And how should it be? A dreadful, cold, always ill, repulsive man. But I hope she may be kept quiet, not to make a scandal until after the funeral at least. I don't know what she said to you, my love, that day; but you must not pay any attention to what a woman says in such an excited state. Her marriage has been unfortunate (which is a thing that may happen in any circumstances), not because Mr Winterbourn was such a good marriage, but because he was such a disagreeable man.'

Frances, who had no clue to her mother's thoughts, or to any appropriateness in this little speech, had little interest in it. She said, somewhat stiffly, that she was sorry for poor Mrs Winterbourn—but much more sorry for her own mother, who was having so much trouble and

anxiety. Lady Markham smiled upon her, and kissed her tenderly. It was a relief to her mind, in the midst of all those anxious questions, to have a new channel for her thoughts; and upon this new path she threw herself forth in the fullness of a lively imagination, leaving fact far behind, and even probability. She was indeed quite conscious of this, and voluntarily permitted herself the pleasant exercise of building a new castle in the air. Little Frances! And she said to herself there would be no drawback in such a case. It would be the finest match of the season; and no mother need fear to trust her daughter in Sir Thomas's hands.

Sir Thomas came back next morning when Lady Markham was again absent. He told Frances that he had gone to several places where he was told Captain Gaunt was likely to be found, and had seen Markham as usual 'frittering himself away'; but Gaunt had nowhere been visible. 'Some one said he had fallen ill. If that is so, it is the best thing that could happen. One has some hope of getting hold of him so.' But where did he live? That was the question. Markham did not know, nor any one about. That was the first thing to be discovered, Sir Thomas said. For the first time, Frances appreciated her mother's business-like arrangements for her great correspondence, which made an address-book so necessary. She found Gaunt's address there; and passed the rest of the day in anxiety, which she could confide to no one, learning for the first time those tortures of suspense which so many women form a great part of existence. Frances thought the day would never end. It was so much the more dreadful to her that she had to shut it all up in her own bosom, and endeavour to enter into other anxieties, and sympathise with her mother's continual panic as to what Nelly Winterbourn might do. The house altogether was in a state of suppressed excitement; even the servants—or perhaps the servants most keenly of any, with their quick curiosity and curious divination of any changes in the atmosphere of a family—feeling the thrill of approaching revolution. Frances with her private preoccupation was blunted to this; but when Sir Thomas arrived in the evening, it was all she could do to curb herself and keep within the limits of ordinary rule. She sprang up, indeed, when she heard his step on the stair, and went off to the further corner of the room, where she could read his face out of the dimness; and where, perhaps, he might seek her, and tell her, under some pretence: these movements were keenly noted by her mother, as was also the alert air of Sir Thomas, and his interest and activity, though he looked very grave. But Frances did not require to wait for the news she looked for so anxiously.

'Yes, I am very serious,' Sir Thomas said in answer to Lady Markham's question. 'I have news to tell you which will shock you. Your poor young friend Gaunt—Captain Gaunt—wasn't he a friend of yours?—is lying dangerously ill of fever in a poor little set of lodgings he has got. He is far too ill to know me or say anything to me; but so far as I can make out, it has something to do with losses at play.'

Lady Markham turned pale with alarm and

horror. 'Oh, I have always been afraid of this. I had a presentiment,' she cried. Then rallying a little: 'But, Sir Thomas, no one thinks now that fever is brought on by mental causes. It must be bad water or defective drainage.'

'It may be—anything. I can't tell; I am no doctor. But the fact is, the young fellow is lying delirious, raving. I heard him myself; about stakes and chances and losses, and how he will make it up to-morrow. There are other things too. He seems to have had hard lines, poor fellow, if all is true.'

Frances had rushed forward, unable to restrain herself. 'Oh, his mother, his mother—we must send for his mother,' she cried.

'I will go and see him to-morrow,' said Lady Markham. 'I had a presentiment. He has been on my mind ever since I saw him first. I blame myself for losing sight of him. But to-morrow'—

'To-morrow—to-morrow; that is what the poor fellow says.'

HOME-NURSING.

BY A LADY.

INFECTION.

INFECTION, our final theme, is a subject likely to present itself for the consideration of most home-nurses, and is, moreover, one on which there exists the widest difference of opinion on the part of those who know least of the matter. I have met with mothers so ignorant as to be anxious that all their children should have a given complaint at the same time, even going so far as to put a patient suffering from measles or scarlatina to sleep with unaffected children, in the hope of their catching the disease! On the other hand, there are nervous, fussy mothers who will not allow their little ones to go to school or to parties, or to make friends with other children, for fear of problematic disease, and who seem to look upon every outsider as a source of infection. But perhaps the majority of people take a middle course, and whilst shrinking from the first plan, and deriding the second, are scarcely wiser in their incredulity as to isolation and disinfecting. There is also in the minds of many such an idea that the spreading of infectious disease—especially amongst the young—is a matter beyond control, and that it is useless to attempt to interfere with the run of what are popularly known as 'children's diseases.' To such I would specially urge the consideration of the following facts.

(1) There is absolutely no natural law compelling children to run the gauntlet of a series of infectious complaints. (2) There is danger more or less in all such complaints, and no constitution is bettered by the ordeal; whilst in very many cases, even with an apparently good recovery, seeds may be planted to bear bitter fruit in after-life. (3) An apparently slight case, in which the child is hardly ill, may be as fruitful a source of contagion as severer forms of the same disease; in fact, it is often the slight cases that do the most mischief; for when there is evident illness, a doctor will generally be called in, and will give preventive instructions;

whilst in light cases, many a mother will not only trust to home-doctoring, but will exercise her own judgment as to the length of quarantine. (4) Infection is not a mere vague something which is too intangible for attack; but, on the contrary, it has definite means of propagation, which, once understood, may be fought against and overcome. (5) It is a matter of experience that even in lodging-houses, by the use of proper precautions, infection can be so arrested that the first case shall be the last.

There is an excellent work carried on in Hastings, under the name of the Sanitary Aid Association, which seeks to make these principles known amongst the poor; and so successful have been its operations, that in an experience of ten years, there has not been one case of failure. Speaking, too, from personal knowledge, I can say that there are many cases, both in schools and private families, where, by prompt and continued measures, the spread of scarlet fever even can be entirely arrested. But in order to set to work with a chance of success, it is necessary to clearly understand what infection is and in what way it is conveyed.

An infectious fever produces in the blood, and casts off in the various matters passing from the patient's body, certain germs or seeds, which, entering into another person's body, will grow and produce so much like poison as to cause the second person to be attacked with disease similar to that of the original patient. Of course, not everybody who breathes infected air is thus affected, especially if he has previously suffered from the same complaint; but it is these seeds or germs, only, which originate all infectious disease, and they come directly from the body of some sick person from which poison has escaped. Poison having been received into the blood, a period of incubation sets in, during which the affected person goes about as usual, unaware of the mischief that is at work within him. This period varies from a day or so to a fortnight, according to the nature of the disease and the patient's constitution; and is followed by the period of invasion, when there is, generally, slight chilliness, headache, sore throat, lassitude, and a desire to be alone; but sometimes this period of invasion is ushered in suddenly by violent shiverings, sickness, or overwhelming headache. In either case, the symptoms augment and increase, up to a certain point, and then, in favourable cases, gradually subside. The whole attack may occupy only a few days, or it may extend over weeks. In every case, the temperature of the body—taken with the clinical thermometer—rises above normal, especially at night, when there is frequently delirium.

In fevers characterised by a rash, its appearance is relieving, and as it dies away, the general symptoms subside. It is with this class of fever we propose to deal, and it will be simpler to take as typical, scarlet fever, which is the most difficult to deal with, on account of its gravity and of its fatal facility for spreading. In this complaint, every part of the patient's body throws off poison, not only by the breath and skin, but by every organ and special affection. Most people understand something of the danger of the peeling stage; but very few remember the peril attached to every kind of excreta and to

any sort of discharge. But, once get the idea of this all-pervading danger firmly rooted in the mind, and the remedy is almost self-suggestive ; for, happily, there are within the reach of all, agents which have power to destroy poisonous germs, as they leave the body, or before they can attach themselves to fresh soil. For this purpose, there are various disinfectants in use, such as Condyl's or Burnett's fluid, Hartin's crimson salt, or Calvert's carbolic. The doctor will probably name the special preparation he prefers, and directions for use will be found on each bottle ; but it must always be remembered that disinfectants are valuable only in proportion as their use is thoroughly and systematically carried out. Many people forget that a disinfectant can only do a certain amount of work, after which it becomes used up, and is of no avail ; for this reason, the crimson preparations are useful, as their change of colour points to the fact that their work is done ; but the permanganate of potash, of which they are composed, is not in all respects powerful ; and if used, they are generally supplemented by some form of carbolic acid, which is a most valuable agent as long as the fact of its being a strong poison is kept in view.

I have said that the doctor will probably name a disinfectant and give some general preventive instructions ; but he cannot be expected to enter into those details of which the intelligent home-nurse should make herself mistress.

First, as to the sickroom : it should, if possible, be at the top of the house, that there may be no fear of poisonous fumes ascending. If the whole of the upper floor can be given up to the use of patient and nurse, all the better ; but at anyrate, they should have two rooms exclusively their own, and no person who has not had the disease, whether child or adult, should sleep on the same floor, unless absolutely necessary. In all cases of scarlet fever of whatever degree, woollen hangings and carpets should be removed, though, where expense is no object, their place may be taken by washing-curtains and a crumbcloth. The contents of cupboards, wardrobes, or chests of drawers should be removed, and nothing of a woollen nature allowed to remain, except, of course, the patient's bedding, which will be much the same as for ordinary nursing, with the addition of a mackintosh sheet between the mattress and under-blanket.

Ventilation must be most carefully attended to in fever-cases, and a bright fire—except in the height of summer—should be kept burning day and night. It is also a good plan to pull the bed at least a foot away from the wall, that there may be a free current of air all round it.

A sheet soaked in disinfectant should be hung outside the door of the patient's room, and must be kept constantly wet. An excellent contrivance, known as 'Lacy's Isolation Sheet,' will save all trouble in this respect. It consists of an ordinary sheet, headed by a small tank, which can easily be fastened to the framework of the door, and which is so arranged as to keep the sheet constantly wet, without the drippings and mess associated with the usual methods of soaking or syringing. All particulars respecting these sheets may be obtained of the manufacturers,

24 Ringford Road, Wandsworth, S.E. ; and to an amateur especially, the saving of trouble will be well worth the slight outlay.

All food should be brought to within a few feet of the sheet and left for the nurse to take, when the bearer has retired. The nurse's dress should invariably consist of some washing material, and it is well if she can avoid coming into contact with other members of the household ; but should this be impossible, she should wear in the sickroom a loose cotton wrapper, which she can throw aside before leaving it ; and she should also keep a pair of slippers in the second room, to change before she goes down ; and her hands should have a thorough wash with carbolic soap. These directions apply specially to cases where there are other unaffected persons in the house ; and if such are children, the nurse must refrain from kissing or handling them. Such a caution might seem unnecessary, but I have known more than one case in which a mother of intelligence has gone from the sickroom to the nursery, giving its inmates extra petting, to make up for enforced absence, and then has wondered that, 'in spite of all precautions,' one after another of the little ones has sickened ! This is one reason why, as a rule, unaffected children should be removed from the house as soon as possible, subject to the doctor's orders, though, where this is impracticable, there is no need to lose heart, for, as I said before, except in special cases of delicacy, isolation and the free use of disinfectants are a pretty sure safeguard against the spread of fever, unless, as often happens, infection has been carried before the first case has come under treatment. On this account, I would strongly advise, particularly during an epidemic, that any child who appears to be out of sorts should at once be separated from his play-fellows, and if headache, sore throat, or sickness come on, a doctor should immediately be summoned.

Keeping in view what I started by saying, that every organ of the patient's body is capable of throwing off poison, it follows that everything he touches becomes infected. His bed and body linen, in spite of constant changing, become so highly charged with poison, that they need to be immediately plunged into a tub or bath of disinfecting fluid—which should be provided with a well-fitting cover—and left to thoroughly soak, after which they should be hung up to dry in the open air. Thus treated, and a fresh supply of disinfectant used for each change of linen, there will be no danger in sending it to the wash in the ordinary way. But there can hardly be greater cruelty than to send out of the house clothes charged with poison, which may spread disease right and left amongst those who have it least in their power to arrest its course.

The nurse's linen should be treated in the same way, and she should never allow her own or the patient's to lie about, as is so often done, till just before the laundress comes. In fact, it is half the battle to disinfect at once, and to keep clear of continued poison-shedding.

All cups, plates, spoons, &c., used by the patient, especially any that go down-stairs, should be placed in some disinfectant—not carbolic—before being thoroughly washed in the ordinary way.

If the use of the draw-sheet becomes necessary, it must be removed as often as soiled, and plunged at once into a special covered bath of extra strong disinfectant. The mackintosh underneath it should also be frequently sponged with disinfectant of the same extra strength; but it will need to be quickly sponged off with cold water, if the fabric is to be uninjured.

All water used for washing or gargling should have in it some non-odorous disinfectant; for the latter purpose, Condy's remedial fluid is excellent. If the patient has a cough, or discharge from the throat, he should be supplied with a small basin, half filled with disinfectant, which will need frequent renewal; but if, as often happens in such cases, there is extreme prostration, it will be better to get a supply of small pieces of rag, to be used once, and then burned, or, if the fire is not quick, put into strong disinfectant before being destroyed. The same course must be adopted, should poulticing be necessary. If used for an abscess, these poultices will be poisoned through and through, and it is better to disinfect thoroughly before burning. It is also a good plan to use a little Condy—subject to the doctor's approval—in the water used to make the poultice. Of course, anything in the shape of discharge, whether by abscess or from throat or ear, very much increases the difficulty of nursing, and calls for such great vigilance and care in handling, that amateur nursing is only allowable when it is impossible to obtain better; and indeed, in all cases of malignant scarlet fever, the patient will have a much better chance in skilled hands, very few of the inexperienced being able to attend to the question of infection, whilst having to battle with illness, hard enough to manage by itself.

In ordinary cases, not malignant, a careful following out of the above rules will suffice; but it is advisable also to disinfect the air of the room by the use of a spray-producer, two or three times a day, in addition to a saucer of carbolic on each side of the bed. It is also well to wipe over the floor and furniture with a cloth damped in disinfectant. The debris of the room should always be burned in a brisk fire, and never put into the ordinary dust-bin.

In convalescence, the same precautions must be continued, even though the patient appears to be quite well; for peeling of the skin (desquamation) will sometimes in the slightest cases not begin till the fourth week, and this is the period of greatest danger as regards the spread of disease. The patient, if a child, will have his toys about him, and if an adult, will very likely be reading books from a circulating library and writing letters to his friends, by both of which means he is sowing infection broadcast; so that, for home-nursing, it should be an inviolable rule that no letters shall be allowed to go out of the sickroom till the doctor gives consent, and that all toys and books shall be burned when the general cleaning-up takes place.

The length of quarantine must be determined entirely by the doctor, for patients may continue to give off infection from the skin and internal organs long after any external signs have ceased; and the nurse should encourage her patient to put up with the tedium of continued isolation, rather than run the risk of spreading what, those

who know its worst forms will agree, is a terrible visitation.

Disinfectant baths, and sometimes oiling of the skin, precede the patient's release from quarantine; but this is a matter for the doctor's discretion. The nurse should be particular to inquire whether half-quarantine or any special precautions are to be observed after the patient has begun to mix with other people; and no child should be allowed to return to school without a certificate to the effect that he is free from the possibility of carrying infection.

As regards the final cleansing of the sickroom—if the above instructions have been carefully carried out, it will be enough to sweep all the bed-clothes; to sponge bed, mattress, and pillow-ticks, and all the furniture, with strong disinfectant, and to sweep over floor, walls, and ceiling with carbolic powder, applied with a brush covered in flannel. Nothing need be destroyed beyond any unwashable articles worn by the patient during convalescence. His toys and books, sponge, and brushes—these to be burned in a brisk fire. All washable clothes, including bed linen and the nurse's garments, should receive a final disinfectant bath before being washed in the ordinary way. It is always well to ask the doctor if he considers such means sufficient; and should the nurse have reason to fear that the bed has become infected, she should not hesitate to say so, for a bed is just one of those things which is capable of holding infection for a practically unlimited time, and should there be the least doubt, it is wise to err on the safe side, and let the bed go away to be thoroughly disinfected and re-made.

Should the doctor advise fumigation of the sickroom, it may easily be done as follows: move all furniture away from the walls, spreading out or hanging up cushions, blankets, &c. Shut the register—the chimney having previously been swept—close all cracks round it, the windows or ventilators; then put an ordinary tin pail, half filled with water, in the middle of the room; lay across this a pair of tongs; place the requisite amount of sulphur—according to instructions—on an old tin tray; pour over the sulphur a little spirit; place the tray on the tongs; light the spirit, and retire quickly, closing the door, and fastening up the cracks all round. The fumes of the sulphur will destroy any lingering traces of infection, and the pail of water precludes the possibility of anything catching fire. The room should be left thus for twenty-four hours, and then thoroughly aired, door, window, and chimney being opened for a couple of days; but even then the smell will continue for some little time, and any furniture or clothing had better be left in the open air as long as convenient.

If a second room has been used, it will need the milder form of disinfecting, for though only the nurse has used it, she will most likely have carried with her some fever germs, especially in bad cases.

It sometimes happens that a person who has not had the fever is obliged to nurse a patient thus affected; and in this case, she will need to exercise vigilance on her own account. She should never, if possible, approach the patient while fasting. If she can take her meals in

another room, all the better; and in waiting upon him, she should try to stand between him and the window through which air is coming in. Of course, she will endeavour to avoid catching the patient's breath, and whilst coming into close quarters with him, she should try not to swallow. After every personal attention, she should gargle in another room with some disinfectant, and thoroughly wash her hands and nails with carbolic soap. Many people who neglect these precautions get a sore throat whilst nursing the fever, and though a nurse need not unnecessarily alarm herself should she feel such symptoms, she should never neglect to mention the fact to the doctor.

Speaking of the doctor, suggests one very important consideration. I have already alluded to the fact that many people will trust to home-doctoring in slight cases of fever; and unfortunately, it has become very much the fashion to denominate such attacks scarlatina, as distinguished from scarlet fever; whilst, as a fact, the names are as identical as the diseases, scarlatina being simply the technical name for scarlet fever; and moreover, the after-effects, as well as the power of spreading infection, may be quite as grave in slight cases as in more apparently serious attacks. Again, many mothers have not the slightest hesitation in undertaking the care of what they are pleased to term 'only measles'; and I have known children to be in actual danger before there has been the shadow of alarm on the part of the home-doctor. It is a pity such people cannot study the death-rates amongst children, and see how many victims are annually sacrificed to the folly and ignorance which stamps this particular complaint as 'so simple'; for though, of course, some children who have been properly cared for all through, sink, from special causes, as a rule the reverse is the truth; and the danger lies not so much in the disease itself—which really is of a mild character—as in those complications which are liable to occur from the commencement of the attack until some time after the patient appears to have quite recovered, and which need a practised eye to discover and arrest in the very beginning.

There is also this important consideration to be borne in mind—that it is by no means always easy to decide on the nature of a given complaint; for though in books the symptoms are duly arranged within decided limits, in actual experience those limits are often entirely disregarded, so that the doctor even may not be able to immediately pronounce an opinion, even where the mother is perfectly sure—to her own thinking—of the nature of the disease; and this accounts for the fact that in medical practice it is by no means uncommon to discover that there has been scarlet fever of a previous date, by the presence of organic disease, the patient being very likely ignorant of anything more serious than an attack of measles, treated with the proverbial saffron-tea.

One great difficulty in the way of checking the spread of measles is, that it is infectious during the early stage, when there is no rash, and the child appears to have only an ordinary cold; but it cannot hurt to try isolation, and the same rules for disinfecting should be observed, though

the period of quarantine will not be so long as for scarlet fever.

It is a bad plan to put two children suffering from an infectious complaint to sleep together, the effect of which is a constant mutual poisoning. Let each patient have his own bed, and till the fever has subsided at least, keep the children separate.

In whooping-cough there is the same difficulty as with measles, for there is danger of infection before the cough has assumed the peculiar sound from which it derives its name. As soon as the nature of the complaint is thus announced, the child should be isolated; but beyond being separated from his playfellows, the only precautions needed are to supply him with a basin half filled with Condyl's fluid, and to fully disinfect his handkerchiefs before sending to the wash; and if there is sudden sickness, to disinfect any article accidentally soiled.

Children often suffer more from terror than from the actual cough. 'Are I doing to shake?' was the pitiful cry of my last little patient, and in such cases, it is a great comfort to the sufferer to let him rest across your arm, thrown round his waist, during a paroxysm; and if ever 'spoiling' is allowable, it is when every little excitement brings on the dreaded cough. In all but the mildest cases, which are so slight as to need no medicine, I would urge the calling in of prompt medical advice, for, with delicate children, there is more or less liability to inflammation of the air-passages, and the remedial measures to be used are only fit for skilled hands. *Never* give a child any of the various preparations sold as specifics for whooping-cough; they mostly contain injurious drugs, and a child requiring medicine needs also watching and care beyond an amateur's. This is a specially needed caution, for many people are under the impression that the cure for whooping-cough is being out of doors, and though fresh air—especially change of air—is most desirable in convalescence, in the earlier stages, anything of the nature of damp or keen wind is enough to dip the scale on the side of bronchitis or inflammation of the lungs.

Diphtheria is a very difficult disease to manage, because, whilst highly infectious, it is almost impossible, in bad cases, to disinfect thoroughly as you go on. Scarlet fever precautions must be rigidly carried out, and the room will probably need special disinfecting—according to the doctor's orders—both during and after an attack. When the patient becomes too weak to sit up, he must be kept plentifully supplied with soft rags, which, after once using, should be thrown into strong disinfectant before being burned.

Smallpox is still, unhappily, in our midst, and though in the old days it used to be dreaded, alike for its innate horror and its almost unlimited power of spreading, it is now, I think, more easily managed than scarlet fever or diphtheria, because of the antidote always ready to hand. The great thing is to isolate or remove the patient at once, and to see that all members of the household needing it are re-vaccinated. I have known this plan succeed so well, that in a family of twelve children, the first patient has remained the last, in spite, too, of his having come into contact with several of the unaffected, all of whom however, had been primarily vaccinated. One

shudders to think of the terrible results that one such case would have produced, not so very many years ago; and those who refuse to let their children be vaccinated, not only lay themselves open to danger, but expose their innocent victims to the chance of suffering, which needs to be seen or felt to be rightly estimated. I venture to say that no parent with any sort of kindly feeling would neglect this simple safeguard, if he had experienced only the torture of that peculiar, indescribable back-ache, which is frequently but the earnest of worse things to come for the small-pox patient.

COLONIAL TRAINING FOR GENTLEMEN'S SONS.

RAPID as has been our advance in almost every kind of social progress during the last forty or fifty years, it is probable that no greater strides have been made in any department than in that which includes education. Yet how enormous is the opening for further progress in this direction! Probably one-half of all our social troubles is due to the present lamentable neglect of the great question of education—using the word in that wider sense which includes not 'schooling' merely, but all sorts of general and technical training intended to fit men and women for their special stations in life. If we look around us, we may see—in spite of much distress and many complaints as to the keenness of competition and scarcity of employment—a considerable demand for really first-class workmen and workwomen in not a few branches of industry. There is, both in this country and in our colonies, an almost unlimited demand for well-trained domestic servants and competent cooks; yet, in spite of this unsupplied demand, may be seen in every direction—in the slums and back-streets of London and other large towns, in the cottages of the poor in country villages, in our jails and workhouses, all alike—numbers of growing girls and slovenly women, who, had they been taken in hand in time, might have been trained with ease to fill efficiently these vacant posts, instead of being allowed to lead lives which are often nearly useless, and too often, lives of want and misery, if not of crime.

Then, again, there is not one of our colonies that does not stand in the most grievous need of that which is the life and soul of all countries—namely, population; yet, again, we have in England thousands upon thousands of loafers and ne'er-do-wells—let alone our paupers!—many of whom are frequently in the direst want, and nearly all of whom are now so irretrievably set in the ruts of their wretched lives as to be utterly unable to profit by emigration, even if unlimited funds were forthcoming to send them out to the colonies. It is impossible to deny that, had these received proper attention when young, very much could have been done, with comparative ease, and great benefit and economy to all concerned, towards converting them into exactly the kind of men our colonies so sorely want to till their millions of acres of vacant, though fertile, land. In short, greater care is needed in nearly every branch of industry, especially to train the young to perform efficiently

those particular duties in life for which they are destined. The 'raw material'—so to speak—we have in abundance, and it would actually cost less in the long-run to convert it into manufactured goods of the kind required, than to allow it to run to waste, as is now so largely done. The subject of 'technical education' for mechanics and others of a like class has been deservedly receiving much attention of late; but this short-sighted nation still requires to be made to see more clearly that technical education, of one sort or another, is required in nearly every vocation in life—as much for the son of a country squire, destined some day to become a member of parliament, as for the ragged and destitute children, many of whom might, with the greatest advantage to all concerned, be trained to become respectable domestic servants or thriving colonists.

The whole subject is a very large one, and it is not intended in the present place to do more than treat briefly of one of its minor, though still important, branches—that of a colonial training for the sons of gentlemen and others of high birth and good education. Whether or not emigration is, on the whole, a desirable thing for the sons of clergymen, doctors, and the like, is a point which will not be discussed herein; it is enough to accept the fact that many such go out for better or for worse—too often, it must be admitted, for the latter, though this is in most, if not all, cases clearly due to a total want of preparation for the life of a colonist. A recent writer, who must at least be credited with a good knowledge of his subject, says: 'From long experience, I should say that not over ten per cent. of the people above the rank of a labouring man who go to America succeed there, though the reason of this is not hard to find.' This reason, he goes on to explain, is, that 'the greater number go without the slightest idea as to what they are going to do, or how they are going to do it; nor have they, in many instances, either capital or practical knowledge enough to command success.' It is the object of the present paper to point out how the one great cause of this too frequent failure may be best avoided.

The training usually undergone by young men of the middle and upper classes is of such an absurdly ridiculous kind, if intended to fit the object of it for the life of an emigrant, that one could hardly do otherwise than laugh at the whole matter, were it not clearly a case for serious commiseration. Let us select, for the sake of example, a case which is fairly typical of numberless others. We will imagine some country clergyman with perhaps a large family and an income of, say, three hundred pounds per annum—sufficient at any rate to enable him to live respectably in his comfortable rectory, but not sufficient to enable him to give all his sons a thorough training in any particular trade or profession. Under these circumstances, one at least will probably be destined for a colonial life. The father of course sees the necessity of giving all his sons a good schooling, to commence with. The one whose fortunes we are following is accordingly sent to an establishment where he obtains the usual amount of book-learning, which will include a more or less

thorough knowledge of Latin and Greek, as well as a fair acquaintance with arithmetic, geography, science, modern languages, and with that wearisome catalogue of the misdeeds of the great potentates of past ages, commonly called history. The youth leads a fairly easy genteel life; his vacations are spent in visiting school-fellows, in picnics, boating-parties, cricket-matches, and similar recreations. In time, perhaps, he is promoted to one of the larger public schools, where he will probably make many friends and pick up a good deal of polish, but will learn little or nothing that will be of use to him in his after-life in the colonies. Yet, when this young man leaves school at the age of seventeen or eighteen, his father too often fondly imagines that he has done all that was required to fit his son for a colonial life. Had the son been destined, as some of his brothers probably are, either for the church, the army, the bar, the navy, or the medical profession, the preliminary training he has already undergone would have fitted him fairly well for the further training he would have to undergo; but, as he is destined for the colonies, it may be truly said that not only has he not received a training fitting him for his future life, but he has positively received a kind of training likely to *unfit* him for it.

When this elegantly dressed, finely polished, book-learned young man finds himself in due course in one or other of the colonies, he at once takes up his abode at some good club or hotel in one of the principal towns, calls on old acquaintances, presents his letters of introduction—if he have any—and professes himself to be on the lookout for employment. The idea of leaving the town, of going out into the country districts, and of taking service with some plodding settler, living in a rough farmhouse, and doing most of the work of the farm with his own hands, is, naturally enough, quite foreign and repulsive to his whole nature. He has probably never done a stroke of really hard manual labour in all his life—has, in fact, never been brought up to do anything of the kind. Yet, practically speaking, almost the only kind of employment the colonies can offer to new-comers is directly manual, and is usually connected with agriculture; and when the small stock of money which the emigrant brought out is exhausted, he will be compelled by necessity to take to this kind of work. If in Australia, he probably goes up into the bush or the back-country and helps to herd cattle; if in New Zealand, he may go to sheep-tending; if in the Canadian north-west, he may drift—as many have already done—into the ranks of the mounted police, or he may turn-to and work for his board for some settler living in a rude and comfortless shanty on the prairie. When this period arrives, the hardships, more or less inseparable at first from a settler's life in a new country, come upon the 'greenhorn' with ten times the severity they need have done, had only his well-intentioned though mistaken parent done what all those who have any acquaintance with the subject must regard as the only rational thing to do under the circumstances—namely, to train his son with the special view of fitting him to the life for which he is destined.

But the matter does not end with the emi-

grant's feeling of mental distress at finding himself, when fresh from a comfortable home, compelled to undergo—very likely among rough and ignorant strangers—things which his previous bringing-up has rendered distasteful to him—at first, at anyrate—to work in the open fields from dark to dark, to eat the coarsest of coarsely prepared food, and to lodge in a wretched shanty, if not for a time in the open air; for, even supposing that the emigrant is a determined young fellow, well supplied with the pluck and energy of youth, that he struggles against, and in time overcomes his difficulties, still his lamentable want of experience is but partially removed. The success of his whole life as a colonist is still imperilled. He knows little or nothing of agricultural matters, has probably never handled a plough or milked a cow, does not know how to swing an axe, to put up a fence, or build the roughest of log-shanties; perhaps hardly even knows how to harness a horse. Yet, if he is ever to get on, he must know all these things; and if the luckless youngster endeavours to start farming on his own account before he has thoroughly learned them, he will probably pay for the necessary experience a very large part, if not the whole, of his very limited capital. His knowledge of Latin and Greek, his acquaintance with algebra and history, will not in any way assist him to acquire the experience he must have. The poorest and worst-educated farm-labourer, however newly arrived, occupies for the time a more desirable position in life than a freshly arrived gentleman's son of the class indicated. The manual labour, the rough life, and the coarse food are only what the former is accustomed to; while every settler would sooner employ him than the gentleman's son, because he has a practical acquaintance with his trade.

Such a picture as that now sketched is not a pleasant one to contemplate; yet it cannot be denied that thousands of well-bred young Englishmen, on first emigrating, have experienced hardships and vexations quite as great as those described; and it is certain that the parents of most of these must be accused of culpable ignorance or negligence in sending out their sons under such conditions. Of those who have succumbed under the hardships, and have drifted into the large towns, only to become whisky-drinkers and gamblers, but little need be said, though they are not a few. The writer has already stated that it is not his intention to discuss the abstract desirability of emigration for gentlemen's sons; but he cannot resist saying that, if the emigration is to be carried on under such conditions as those described, it had far better not be carried on at all. This, however, leads directly to the question: 'Can nothing be done to alter this state of things?'

The only answer obviously is that, by rational means, very much could undoubtedly be done to remedy it. These means would consist for the most part in the adoption of a special course of practical instruction for those destined for a colonial career. If this be not done, the greater part of the blame for the too frequent non-success of well-educated young men in the colonies must be laid at the door of the parents and others who are responsible for their training, rather than upon the young men themselves.

It is hardly to be expected that before the age of thirteen or fourteen years any boy should exhibit such marked characteristics as would enable a parent to decide whether or not his son was fitted for a colonist's life ; but after passing that age, the question can usually be answered with fair accuracy. At this period of life, therefore, those youths who are destined for a colonial career should be taken from the ordinary schools, and sent to others at which they would undergo a course of instruction specially planned with a view to fit them for commencing life in the colonies at, say, the age of seventeen to nineteen. It is essential that the practical nature of such an education should be its main characteristic. Whilst ordinary school-work should be in no way neglected, the pupils should gradually be accustomed, as an integral part of their education, to perform real, outdoor, manual labour. A *literary* master—as distinguished from a *practical* master—should, therefore, be provided, exactly as in an ordinary school. Side by side with his arithmetic, languages, and the like, each pupil should be taught to handle the plough ; to do rough carpentering and blacksmith's work of various kinds, including the building of bridges and houses, the shoeing of horses, and the repairing of carts, farm-implements, and machinery ; to do simple cookery ; to take charge of and manage horses and other live-stock ; and generally, to perform with his own hands most of the ordinary operations of an English farm.

In addition to the foregoing essentials, it is very desirable that the pupils should have a fairly comprehensive knowledge of the theory of farming, of the principles of geology, and of the charge of engines and other machinery. There are, of course, other things which it would be advantageous for the pupil to know something of, such as the rudiments of book-keeping, land-surveying, dam-building, seamanship, and other matters mentioned in the rather alarmingly long list of necessary accomplishments given by Major-general Feilding in his valuable paper, 'Whither shall I send my son?' (*Nineteenth Century*, July 1883). It may be thought by some that the list of requirements given above is unnecessarily long ; but it should be remembered that, in young countries, the 'division of labour' is not nearly so complete as in older ones ; every man is in no slight degree a 'jack-of-all-trades.' A part of each day should be devoted to each kind of instruction. At certain stated hours, one class should turn to outdoor work, another to school-work, while another might be learning how to cook. Early rising should certainly be enjoined by the rules of the establishment ; and, amusing as the idea may seem at first, it would be well if, during the pleasanter portions of the year, the pupils were given some experience of camp-life. Clearly, if the object is to fit the pupils for a colonial life, the accommodation provided should be of a plain and inexpensive kind ; and as the institution should be situated in the country, where rents and the expenses of living are low, and as the work done by the pupils whilst learning would to some extent benefit the institution, it is certain that the cost of such an education would be considerably less than that of ordinary schooling ; while at the same time it would most effectually prepare the pupils for

their future career, instead of actually unfitting them for it.

It is quite unnecessary to enumerate other small details as to how the establishment should be conducted. Such a training as that described would undoubtedly have about it much that would amuse and fascinate youths of sixteen or seventeen years ; and it may be very safely stated that lads who were too delicate to undergo such a course of training, or to whom such a life would be distasteful, would certainly fail in the colonies, and consequently, should never be sent there.

Undoubtedly, the foregoing scheme of education could be most effectively carried out by the establishment of a 'Colonial Training College' on an extensive scale, with a regular staff of teachers, and a sufficiently large extent of farm-land attached. This would of course involve the expenditure of a considerable sum of money ; but if done in a rational manner, there ought to be no question of the institution being a self-supporting and remunerative concern, while the benefits it would confer upon the pupils would be very great. Much good could, however, be accomplished by the adoption of far simpler means. There are many large farmers in the eastern counties and elsewhere who might profitably utilise one of the large and rambling, though comfortable old houses—now so often filled with the families of several labourers—belonging to their 'off-hand' farms, as a school, with a competent master—perhaps the clergyman of the parish—engaged to superintend the scholastic studies of, say, twenty or thirty pupils, and another teacher to direct their practical outdoor work. The pupils should, under proper supervision, be required to take part in the actual work of the farm ; they would have the chance of becoming good shots—a matter of some importance in the colonies ; and they would enjoy all the other advantages of English country life. The farmer, on the other hand, ought to be able, if he managed his undertaking skilfully, to profit, in these times of agricultural depression, both by the unpaid-for labour of his pupils and by the more direct proceeds of the establishment. The scheme thus roughly sketched out is well worth a trial.

It is true that there are Agricultural Colleges of various kinds both in England and in the colonies ; but very few, if any, of these exactly answer the requirements of the case. Those in this country are, very naturally, better fitted for training English farmers than colonial settlers ; while youths sent to those in the colonies would have to undergo an unnecessarily early separation from home and friends, and would lose the great benefits derivable from the influence of English refinement and a sound English education. At the present time there are in England several institutions more or less nearly answering to the required description. The Agricultural School at Aspatria, near Carlisle, trains some of its pupils for the colonies on moderate terms. Accommodation for a limited number of pupils and excellent opportunities for properly training them are provided on the Eastwood Manor Estate, of seven hundred acres, near Bristol ; but the terms are above the means of the class from which the majority of emigrants are drawn. An institution at Hollesley Bay, Suffolk, under the name of

'The Colonial College and Training Farms, Limited,' promises very closely to answer to the requirements of the case. It is to be regretted that the scheme for the establishment of a suitable college on an extensive tract of land which has been acquired in Dorsetshire for that express purpose, as foreshadowed in Major-general Fielding's article already alluded to, has not yet been carried out, though it has not been abandoned. The case of the ordinary English 'farm-pupil' has little or no bearing upon the matter in hand; while, of the system under which young men are placed out with settlers in the colonies to be taught farming, the best that can be said is that it usually leads to fraud.

SHARP SAYINGS.

In Ireland, a sharp fellow is said to be as 'acute as the fox of Ballybotherem, which used to read the papers every morning to find out where the hounds were to meet. It was probably an Irishman who said: 'Man is like a potato—never sure when he will get into hot-water.' But Pat has rivals in many countries, some of whom could run him close in repartee and sharp sayings.

It must have been some foreigner taking off our national reserve who described the meeting of two Englishmen on a steamer in mid-ocean. One asked: 'Going across?' 'Yes, Are you?' And there the conversation ended.—A gentleman at a foreign restaurant who had just been assisted to a bottle of wine, was thus addressed by the smiling proprietor of the establishment: 'Now, what do you think of my wine, eh? Genuine first-rate stuff, isn't it?' 'O yes; as far as that goes,' replied the other, smacking his lips; 'it fairly makes one's mouth *water*.'—An item from a German paper says: 'The cashier of a Prussian bank has absconded with a considerable sum of money, and will, according to astronomical calculations, be seen again in four hundred and fifteen years.'

Many a boarding-house patron gets into hot-water when he ladles out the soup, says one of the American papers, which generally contain some smart sayings on various topics. Another paper commenting on the assertion that the human figure is six times the length of the feet, remarks, that the Chicago people must be about twelve feet high. With much humour and satire, we are informed how a lamentable mistake was lately made by a girl in St Louis. She married a man under the impression that he was her father's coachman, and he turned out to be a Mexican nobleman. She pronounced him a fraud, and wants to get rid of him.

'Can dogs find their way home from a distance?' is a question frequently asked. It is according to the dog. If it is one you want to get rid of, he can find his way back from Africa. If it is a good one, he is apt to get lost if he goes round the corner.—A great writer says: 'A man ought to carry a pencil and note down the thoughts of the moment.'—'Yes,' remarks a Yankee editor; 'and one short pencil devoted exclusively to that use would last some men we know about two thousand years, and then have the original point on.'

Some men, says another writer, are ever ready to offer a remedy for everything. The other day we remarked to one of these amateur apothecaries: 'An idea struck us yesterday; and before we could finish he advised us: 'Rub the part affected with arnica.'

The man who said, 'A landlady who boards her lodgers, like the rest of us, has her weak and strong points, the weak being her coffee, and her strong, the butter,' would probably be ungallant enough to agree with the following: 'The reason why a woman always adds a postscript to her letter is because she's bound to have the last word, if she has to write it herself.' Equally uncomplimentary was the man who, reading that a woman's voice can be heard for two miles by a man in a balloon, remarked that perhaps that was the reason so few men go up in a balloon.

A wit says the times are so dull that it is difficult for him even to collect his ideas. Perhaps this is the man, said to be so lazy that he has worked but once, and that was when he was labouring under a mistake. Another wag says: 'To forget a wrong is the best revenge, particularly if the other fellow is bigger than you.'—'I do not say that that man will steal,' said a witness on a trial; 'but if I was a chicken, I'd roost high when he was around.' A humorist says: 'If you think no one cares for you in this cold world, just tell your neighbours that you propose to keep hens. You will be surprised to see what an immediate interest they will manifest in you.' A philosopher declares that no thoroughly occupied man was ever miserable; but that philosopher is reminded by another that he probably never spent a forenoon among his friends trying to borrow, a five-shilling piece.

'The wisest of all sayings,' said a member in a club, 'is the old Greek maxim, "Know thyself."'-Yes,' remarked another; 'there's a deal of wisdom in it; "Know thyself," but never introduce a friend.' A country-woman made an amusing remark to a thirsty tourist who had emptied several cups of milk and asked for more. Bringing him a large bowl filled with milk, she said: 'One would think, sir, you had never been weaned!'—A young married man gazing at two trunks in the hall belonging to his mother-in-law, sadly observed: 'She has brought her clothes to a visit; would that she had brought her visit to a close.' As witty was the critic's comment on hearing that a lawyer had composed a poem on 'My Conscience.' 'It ought to sell well,' said he; 'the public are fond of novelties.'

Speaking of dancing, a clergyman hit the right nail on the head when he remarked 'that people usually do more harm with their tongues than with their toes.'—'What is the usual definition of conscience?' asked a man of his pastor. 'A man's rule for his neighbour's conduct is about the way it comes out practically,' was the apt reply.—'What a number of ladies there were at church this morning wearing sealskin cloaks!' exclaimed Smith's wife. 'I counted no less than twenty-seven.'

'Do you think that is the proper way to occupy one's mind while at church?' replied Smith. 'I didn't notice a single one.'

'One can scarcely be expected to notice such things, when one's asleep,' was the sharp retort.

Not very complimentary to the sex was the answer of an old bachelor to a young mother, who exclaimed: 'Shouldn't you like to have a family of rosy boys about your knees?'—'No, ma'am,' said he; 'I'd rather have a lot of yellow boys in my pocket.'

'You say your brother is younger than you, yet he looks much older.'—Yes, he has seen a great deal of trouble; but I never married,' was the ready reply. More sarcastic is the next. 'Are you fond of tongue, sir?'—'I was always fond of tongue, madam, and like it still.'

'John, what is the best thing to feed a parrot on?' asked an elderly lady of her bachelor brother, who hated parrots. 'Arsenic!' gruffly answered John.

Rather severe are the three following comments. 'I've turned many a woman's head,' boasted a French dandy. 'Yes,' replied his hearer—'away from you.'—'That's the sort of umbrella that people appropriate,' said a gentleman to a companion one morning, showing him a very handsome one. 'Yes,' rejoined his companion quickly; 'I thought so when I saw you holding it.'—The guests having dined, the host hands round a box of cigars. 'I don't smoke myself,' he says; 'but you will find them good—my man steals more of them than any other brand I ever had.'

THE VALUE OF SUNSHINE.

'WHAT a horrible glare! The sun will take all the colour out of the carpet,' and such-like remarks, issue daily from the lips of thrifty housewives in summer. The value of sunlight is but little understood, and yet its advantages are apparent everywhere. Note the pale cheeks of the town-bred child which passes more than half its existence in the house, and which, when out of doors, the sun usually reaches through a veil-like cloud of smoke. Note, again, a geranium grown in a dimly-lighted cellar. Its leaves will be pale, if not almost white, for lack of sunlight, and it will look only what it is—a weakly, sickly plant. Transplant child and geranium into the country—roses bloom at the end of a few weeks on the cheeks of one, flowers and green leaves appear on the other. But sunlight does more than give rosy cheeks and health; it absolutely prevents disease in many cases; for, if given time enough, it kills the germs of the air which produce putrefaction. It seems to be a wonderful provision of nature that the putrefaction which is often caused by the heat of the sun, can be prevented, or even stopped after it has commenced, by exposure of the putrefying substance to direct sunlight. This fact is evidenced in sun-dried meat or fish. If the meat or fish, instead of being hung in the sun, were placed, subject to a similar heat, in the shade, it would quickly become tainted. It is clear, therefore, that the light has as important an influence in the operation as the heat. The latter dries up the juices; the former prevents putrefaction; for in sunlight, the germs which bring about that state cannot continue to live.

Many experiments have been attempted to determine the effect of sunlight on germs; but the results have been anything but satisfactory,

being rather mystifying than otherwise. A French savant, M. Duclaux, has, however, recently conducted certain experiments on the ordinary germs of the air that produce putrefaction, with some definite and therefore gratifying results. The experiments, though no doubt difficult to carry out, were very simple in their nature, and are quite within the comprehension of the ordinary reader.

M. Duclaux commenced by cultivating the microbes which are chiefly responsible for the 'turning' of milk, because a microbe that can break down a substance such as milk would, generally speaking, be very similar to the disease germ that breaks down the tissues of the body. At the germ-forming period, he introduced some into each of a number of carefully sterilised flasks. The flasks he then stopped with wool, so that the air, but no fresh germs, could enter. The various flasks were then treated in different ways. Some were exposed to sunlight; others were kept in ordinary light—that is, not in the sun; others, again, were kept in an ordinary light, but in a temperature equal to sun-heat. The results proved the great value of sunlight. The milk in the flasks which were exposed to heat only, turned putrid almost immediately—that is to say, the germs preserved their vitality. (It had been ascertained that for three years the germs could be exposed to a tropical heat, provided there was no direct sunlight, without harm to them.) The results were very different with regard to the flasks exposed to the sunlight: in these, it was found that, after a month, the power of putrefaction of the germs decidedly diminished, and that their vitality was lowered. After two months' exposure, the noxious germs were destroyed in two out of five flasks. There the experiments stopped. It is probable, if not certain, that different varieties of germs require different periods of exposure to sunlight to be killed.

These scientific experiments are valuable as showing *how* mankind is benefited by sunlight. That mankind is so benefited has been acknowledged for ages by thoughtful persons, though the extent of those benefits are not so generally known or appreciated as they ought to be. Except in the hottest summer weather, sunlight should be admitted freely into houses; and never, even on the plea that otherwise the sun will put out the fire, should blinds be pulled wholly or partially down in winter. It should at the same time be borne in mind that in hygiene, fresh air ranks equal to sunlight in importance. 'Live on the sunny side of the street, for there the doctor never comes,' is a proverb which should never be forgotten, and is the outcome, not of scientific experiments, but of the experience of generations.

RAILWAY ACCIDENTS AND CASUALTIES.

DURING the twelve months ending December 31, 1884, the total number of personal accidents on all the railways and on railway premises in the United Kingdom amounted to one thousand one hundred and eighty-six persons killed and eight thousand and twenty-three injured. This of course includes passengers, railway servants,

trespassers, suicides, and all other classes, and all kinds of accidents; but the number of persons killed and injured from accidents to trains, rolling-stock, or permanent way, &c., is very much smaller, there being thirty-one passengers killed and eight hundred and sixty-four injured; and of servants of Companies or contractors, twenty-three were killed and one hundred and fifteen injured.

By accidents from other causes, but still connected with the movement of vehicles used exclusively upon railways, one hundred and four passengers were killed and six hundred and twenty-seven injured; while from the same class of accidents, five hundred and twenty-three servants of Companies or contractors were killed and two thousand two hundred and four injured. These 'accidents from other causes' include, in the case of passengers, falling between trains and platforms (twenty-nine killed and sixty-one injured); falling on to the platform, ballast, &c., when getting in and out of trains (six killed and four hundred and five injured); accidents whilst crossing the line at stations (forty-one killed and twenty-two injured); from falling out of carriages during the travelling of trains (seven killed and thirty injured, &c.). This class of accidents includes, in the case of servants, accidents during shunting and other operations while on duty, and whilst crossing or standing on the line on duty; accidents from coming in contact with bridges, &c., during the travelling of trains, &c.

During the year, sixty-five persons were killed and twenty-seven injured while passing over railways at level crossings. Of trespassers, two hundred and ninety-five were killed and one hundred and eighty-seven injured; while fifty-three persons committed suicide. Forty other persons were killed and seventy-six injured, not coming in any of the classifications given above.

In the class of accidents occurring on railway premises, but not connected with the movement of vehicles used exclusively on railways, fifty-two persons were killed and three thousand nine hundred and twenty-three injured. Out of these, six of the killed and two hundred and forty-one of the injured were passengers; seven killed and ninety-four injured were persons on business at stations; and the remainder, thirty-nine killed and three thousand five hundred and eighty-eight injured, were servants. In connection with this class of accidents, several of a very peculiar nature may be noticed. They include three passengers killed and one hundred and fourteen injured while ascending or descending steps at stations, thirty-nine injured by being struck by barrows and falling over packages, &c., on station platforms, and two killed and thirty injured from falling off platforms. In the case of servants, six were killed and nine hundred and eighty-two injured while engaged in loading and unloading or sheeting wagons; three were killed and three hundred and twenty-two injured by the falling of wagon-doors, bales of goods, lamps, &c.; six were killed and two hundred and thirty-three injured from falling off platforms, ladders, &c.; from stumbling whilst walking on the line or platforms, one was killed and two hundred and thirty-four were injured; while working at

cranes or capstans, three were killed and one hundred and sixty-nine injured; and one was killed and forty-nine were injured by being trampled on or kicked by horses. The occupation of a platelayer on a railway would seem to be a very dangerous one, for during the twelve months, one hundred and twenty-five servants of this class were killed and one hundred and fifty-four injured.

After reading all these particulars of killed and injured, it might be inferred that railway travelling is a dangerous mode of transit; but when the number of passengers carried is taken into consideration, it will be found that such is by no means the case. During the twelve months ending December 31, 1884, over six hundred and ninety-five million passengers were conveyed on all the railways in the United Kingdom, and, as stated before, the number of passengers killed during the same period from accidents to trains, rolling-stock, &c., was thirty-one, and the number injured, eight hundred and sixty-four, or an average, very nearly, of one killed out of every twenty-two millions carried, and one injured out of every eight hundred thousand carried.

During the year, thirty-one horses, thirty-nine oxen and cows, one hundred and thirty-two sheep, ten pigs, and ten donkeys were run over and killed. We wonder how many dogs!

'WAIT FOR ME.'

SEAWARD runs the littl' stream,
Where the wagoner cools his team,
Where, between the banks of moss,
Stand the stepping-stones to cross.
O'er them comes a little maid,
Laughing, not a bit afraid;
Mother, there upon the shore,
Crossed them safely just before.

This the little lassie's plea—
Wait for me, wait for me!

Ab, so swift the waters run,
One false step, 'twere all undone;
Little heart begins to beat,
Fearing for the little feet.
Soon her fear will all be lost,
When the stepping-stones are crossed;
Three more yet on which to stand—
Two more—one more—then on land!
'Tis the little lassie's plea—
Wait for me, wait for me!

Ab, for you, my laughing lass,
When the years have come to pass,
May one still be near to guide
While you cross Life's river wide.
When no helping hand is near,
None, if you should call, to hear,
Think, however far away,
Mother still knows all you say;
E'en in heaven heeds your plea—
Wait for me, wait for me!

G. CLIFTON BINGHAM.